15: U.S. Navy--30 [4]
116, 581, 587, 595, 842

(no date) 1944

Formosans

"Too many daughters in a house which cannot employ them to economic advantage are an embarrassment and must be sent out to marriages or to common-law cohabitation or concubinage on a less favorable social basis. It is almost unheard of that a widow or divorcee should remarry."

587 586 Second marriages are usually looked down upon, but in order to perpetuate the family line a childless widow may marry again. Divorce, although the rate has been increasing in recent years because of financial difficulties and the growing independence of women, is not as serious a problem in Formosa as it is in the United States. Formosa's divorce rate in 1953 was as low as 0.45 per 1,000 population, as compared with a rate of 2.48 per 1,000 population in 1951 in the United States.[15] For good or ill, a popular adage that a virtuous woman does not marry twice is often repeated, and a divorcee rarely finds opportunity for a second marriage.

582 The average age at which men and women marry is reported to be rising. Among young men of urban areas, marriage is often delayed because of financial difficulties. The adoption of daughters often poses a social problem. 547 548 The old notion that a daughter may be bought or sold like a commodity remains among some uneducated people. Although the purpose of such adoptions may be that of securing a young companion or maintaining the family lines,

15. United Nations, Demographic Yearbook, 1953, New York, 1953, pp. 276-77.

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or wives had died, the proportions at nearly every age were two to three times as great for women as for men (see Table 62). 162 589

TABLE 62

WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS IN TAIWAN

Per Cent of Taiwanese Men and Women Who Were Counted as Widows or Widowers in Each Census, 1905 to 1935, by Age

Age	1905	1915	1920	1925	1930	1935
			Males			
20–24	1.0	0.7	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.4
25–29	2.5	2.1	2.4	1.4	1.2	1.1
30–34	4.3	4.1	4.2	2.9	2.3	1.9
35–39	6.8	6.1	6.6	4.9	4.0	3.4
40–44	10.1	8.8	9.2	7.7	6.5	5.7
45–49	14.0	12.1	12.4	10.7	10.1	8.9
50 and over	28.6	26.3	29.3	23.1	22.2	21.3
			Females			
20–24	2.1	1.7	1.9	1.2	1.0	1.0
25–29	4.8	3.7	4.0	2.7	2.3	2.2
30–34	9.4	6.9	7.4	5.3	4.7	4.4
35–39	17.6	13.2	13.2	10.2	9.3	8.2
40–44	30.2	23.7	22.5	18.7	16.5	15.0
45–49	43.4	37.9	35.2	29.9	27.2	24.1
50 and over	72.2	71.2	69.2	65.1	61.6	57.9

Source: Tables of the Taiwanese population by age, sex and marital status in the reports of each census.

By 1935, the proportions of adult women who were widows had gradually fallen at all ages, until they were no more than half as high as they had been in 1905. The decrease in proportions of widowed men was similar, though less pronounced. Most of this decline probably arose from the fact that spouses of both sexes became less likely to die during early adulthood, thanks to improved mortality. Not all, however, can be definitely attributed to an actual decrease in widowhood, for the census recorded as widowed only those who remained in the status of widows.

Just as death of a husband or wife is a way to end a marriage, remarriage is a way out of widowhood. In the case of women it is one that is not highly regarded by Chinese tradition. A wife leaves her original family and enters that of her husband, where her status at 587 •

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587 first is uncertain and tends to be the target of considerable hostility.[6] But if she bears a child, especially a son, during the husband's lifetime, her membership in his family is made relatively secure, for she becomes the means for continuation of the family line. If the family has enough wealth and enough adult family members to prevail in the matter, it is to be preferred that the wife remain a widow rather than remarry. The attitudes generated by the family system, which manage to induce nearly everyone to marry once, act to some extent as a restraint on the number of years that may be spent in married life. Depending on the circumstances, widowhood therefore may be permanent and have the effect of preventing many women from being mothers of additional children.

But the prohibition against remarrying is often given lax observance. In Taiwan special arrangements were sometimes made to ease the practical difficulties.[7] Many women must have lost their husbands before providing a male heir, and a childless widow might have very little claim to standing in her husband's family. Because the remarriage of widows was not looked upon with favor, they were not likely to enjoy the prospects of so good a match as those of unmarried women. It is commonly known that a cheap wedding can be arranged with widows, and so they probably became wives of poorer men. With the shortage of marriageable women that existed in early Taiwan, the abundance of widows doubtless was a factor in finding wives for many men who otherwise might not have married at all.

Remarriage is not regarded so austerely for widowed men; the same circumstances affect them, but all work in the other direction. A man has compelling reasons to remarry after the death of his wife, and these are even stronger if he has become the head of a household and the father of children. A widower's incentive was equal to that of a widow, and he had fewer obstacles.

586 Like widowhood, *divorce* also removes some men and women from married life and helps to reduce still further the efficiency of mar-

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[6] See Levy, M. J., Jr. (1949), Chapters III and IV.

[7] Since the Chinese conception of marriage and descent is patrilineal, the "normal" course for a widow who remarries would be to enter the family of the second husband. The presence of children born to her as a wife, however, complicates the situation, for they are regarded as descendants in the male line—i.e., members of the first husband's family—and would not ordinarily be relinquished. Among poorer Taiwanese there existed a special form of marriage in situations of this sort, observed also in many parts of China, which provides that the second husband marries *into* the family of the widow's children. Marriage of this kind is deprecated and probably occurs chiefly when a widow is left without able-bodied members of her husband's family.

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incidence before the registration system was established, but also may have been nothing more than a peculiarity of the early operation of the registration system itself. Whatever its initial level, the divorce rate fell steadily throughout the Japanese occupation. Somewhat under four per cent of marriages registered in 1939 failed to last for five years.

The Prevalence of Remarriage

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It is beyond the capacity of these resources to reveal the percentages of any year's marriages that ever ended in divorce. Our disregard of divorces if they occurred more than five years after marriage and the omission of many marriages from registration make it not worth while to strive for more than this approximation. More pressing is the question of what happened to all the people whose marriages suffered this adverse outcome. Even at its lowest stage in Taiwan, divorce was still not uncommon, and produced far more divorced people than the census enumerations were able to detect. Yet experience with these census materials has justified a high respect for their accuracy; there is no reason to doubt that they are the most dependable of all public records in Taiwan. It follows, then, that a large share of those who had been divorced, amounting to most of all those divorced before age 25 or 30, must have remarried. Moreover, they must have remarried without delay, for as a group they spent too little time out of wedlock for more than a small fraction to be counted as divorced in any census.

By way of illustrating the grounds for these conclusions, Table 65 shows the numbers of Taiwanese recorded as divorced in the census of 1920. In adjacent columns are the numbers of remarriages that were registered to divorced persons during that year. In the second portion of Table 65 the same information is given for widows and widowers. Unfortunately the case cannot be made more rigorously. Since there is no way of knowing how many people of each age became divorced or widowed during the year, the total time spent in either status cannot be estimated, and we cannot construct "remarriage rates" by the same procedures applied to people marrying for the first time. In Table 65 it is nonetheless evident that the turnover in divorced and widowed spouses was remarkably high.[9] Remarriages

[9] The turnover may well have been higher than that suggested by Table 65: some remarriages were probably not registered, and some may have been registered incorrectly as first marriages.

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TABLE 65

REMARRIAGES OF WIDOWED AND DIVORCED PERSONS, 1920

(Taiwanese Only)

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Age	Males: Divorced Men Counted on October 1	Males: Remarriages Registered During 1920	Females: Divorced Women Counted on October 1	Females: Remarriages Registered During 1920
A. Divorced*				
10–14	3	1	20	16
15–19	155	66	622	586
20–24	1,303	506	1,389	1,193
25–29	2,362	825	1,185	738
30–34	2,771	727	999	412
35–39	2,756	434	929	236
40–44	2,081	211	786	115
45–49	1,377	100	711	45
50 and over	1,943	53	1,097	20
Total, All Ages	14,751	2,923	7,738	3,361

Age	Males: Widowers Counted on October 1	Males: Remarriages Registered During 1920	Females: Widows Counted on October 1	Females: Remarriages Registered During 1920
B. Widowed*				
10–14	17	1	22	8
15–19	154	48	607	412
20–24	1,278	445	2,504	1,269
25–29	3,191	923	4,224	1,560
30–34	5,058	1,254	7,263	1,455
35–39	7,743	1,364	13,457	1,081
40–44	8,548	930	20,061	624
45–49	9,214	595	27,215	284
50 and over	35,819	503	137,752	133
Total, All Ages	71,022	6,063	213,105	6,826

* The categories of "Widowed" and "Divorced" in this table are restricted to the persons whose original marriages had been registered. Those widowed or divorced men and women whose marriages were not registered have been excluded, for if they remarried they would probably register the event as their first marriage. Accordingly, the numbers in this table are slightly lower than those shown in most census tables for 1920.

Sources: *Census of 1920, Detailed Tables, Total Island*, Table 2; *Vital Statistics of the Population, 1920*, Table 12.

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• 587 at some ages were almost as numerous as those who were found to be eligible at the census date.

162 In 1920, divorced women were favored over men in remarriage, but widows apparently were not. One cannot help noticing that more widows were remarrying in 1920 than widowers—6,826 as against 6,063, taking all ages together. This could happen only because there were many more of them to seek remarriage. The actual likelihood of marrying again was almost certainly poorer for widows than for widowed men, partly for the reasons already mentioned. While the experience of divorced persons was superficially about the same—3,361 remarriages of women, compared with 2,923 of men—the real situation was almost reversed. Since divorce withdraws an equal number of men and of women from marriage, any later sex disparity among the divorced (aside from some loss of men through heavier mortality) must be the result of unequal chances of remarrying. It turns out, therefore, that divorced women enjoyed better chances than divorced men to marry again. Even during the earlier years when divorce was exceptionally widespread in Taiwan, it probably interfered less with future childbearing among the women affected than did widowhood among widows.[10]

Though these facts do not advance us very far toward explaining the reasons for the wide incidence of divorce in Taiwan and its fall, it helps to know that entering divorce (or widowhood) was not an irrevocable step, provided that the people involved were young enough.[11] Some of the advantage that divorced women maintained over widows was simply that they were younger (though it was more than this, since they also remarried more readily at the same ages). But in order to get a more complete answer one must look for the consequences of the high divorce rates among those who were marrying. For this answer it is necessary to put one additional question: Whom did people find to marry in their second attempt?

Under conditions in Taiwan after 1895, and probably also under those that were current before, a remarkably small proportion of all marriages were introducing people into matrimony for the first time. Only 717 of every thousand marriages in 1906 had this effect for men, still fewer—644—for women. A mere 585, less than 60 per cent,

[10] Of course, divorced women were younger, and this made remarriage more likely. But men and women at the same ages also showed the same disparity.

[11] This is, of course, only another way of saying that part of the handicaps often associated with divorce and widowhood arise because many people in these categories are older than the ages at which it is customary to marry.

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TABLE 66

THE SHIFT TOWARD FIRST MARRIAGES IN TAIWAN

Persons Marrying for the First Time, Per 1,000 Total Marriages between Taiwanese, 1906-1943

Year	*Husbands*	*Wives*	*Both Husband and Wife Marrying for First Time*
1906	717	644	585
1910	754	685	629
1915	791	746	691
1920	776	746	684
1925	835	825	766
1930	858	854	797
1935	887	893	836
1940	896	907	851
1943	901	921	864

Source: *Statistical Summary*, Table 70.

united *both* partners for the first time. The remainder went toward restoring to married life the widowed and divorced, who were very numerous. Because so many people dropped out, marriage had become surprisingly inefficient as a way of perpetuating family lines, and a large-scale duplication of effort was regularly incurred by those who tried again.

As time went on, however, we have seen that the shortage of women of marriageable age began to disappear, death separated husbands and wives less frequently, and divorce gradually declined in its incidence. By 1940, marriages had become more lasting and less recidivous for both men and women. The margin by which the proportion of women marrying for the first time lagged behind that of men almost vanished, and as high as 85 per cent of all registered matches were first marriages for both husband and wife.

There were further implications of this shift away from remarriage. Other things being equal (such as the prestige or importance of the particular family connection), a match in which the opposite partner was being married for the first time would be preferred, by the family of either the bride or the groom, over one in which the partner had been divorced or widowed from a previous marriage. The Chinese do not impose on relatives of the deceased the obligation (which is binding in some societies) of marrying a widowed husband or wife; far less do they have any preference for divorced

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TABLE 67

RELATIVE RESTRICTION OF CHOICE IN MATES BY MEN AND WOMEN MARRYING FOR THE FIRST TIME

Per Cent of First Marriages in Each Year That Occurred with Divorced or Widowed Partners of the Opposite Sex. Taiwanese Only

Year	*Unmarried Men. Per Cent Marrying Divorced Wives or Widows*	*Unmarried Women. Per Cent Marrying Divorced Husbands or Widowers*
1906	18	9
1910	16	8
1915	13	7
1920	12	8
1925	8	7
1930	7	7
1935	6	6
1940	5	6
1943	4	6

Source: *Statistical Summary*, Table 70.

persons as candidates for marriage. When people marrying for the first time must take this less desirable latter alternative, it amounts to a restriction in marital choice, through circumstances of poverty or low prestige. We have already found that in their matrimonial position men in some ways were situated unfavorably, owing to the scarcity of eligible women. It is a reflection of this handicap that in the earlier years of registration a much larger proportion of Taiwanese men than women in their first marriage had to accept divorced wives or widows. In this matter of latitude of choice, the subsequent trends in marriage patterns can be summed up as a process of reducing the amount of restriction and equalizing this difference (see Table 67).

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The prospects of widowed or divorced people in remarriage are of course the opposite sides of the same picture, since by Chinese cultural standards their position is expected to be unfavorable. Other things being equal, *their* most advantageous matches are with people previously unmarried. The situation being defined in this way, their chances are closely related to the trends in first marriages—so long as unmarried partners cannot be found for some persons marrying for the first time, these chances might be fairly high.

But it is also true that widowed and divorced people of both sexes

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declined as a portion of the population. For this reason, their chances on remarriage of finding partners not previously married were steadily improved, in spite of the fact that the first-married became less dependent on the widowed and divorced for their supply of

TABLE 68

RELATIVE ADVANTAGE OF MEN AND OF WOMEN IN REMARRIAGE

Per Cent of Registered Remarriages by Widowed and Divorced Persons with Previously Unmarried Partners of the Opposite Sex
Taiwanese Only

	WIDOWED		*DIVORCED*	
Year	*Husbands. Per Cent Marrying Unmarried Women*	*Wives. Per Cent Marrying Unmarried Men*	*Husbands. Per Cent Marrying Unmarried Women*	*Wives. Per Cent Marrying Unmarried Men*
1906	15	30	32	49
1910	17	33	37	53
1915	20	35	39	48
1920	23	31	39	47
1925	29	34	48	48
1930	30	33	54	51
1935	44	40	60	55
1940	48	42	63	54
1943	52	43	68	52

Source: *Statistical Summary*, Table 70.

spouses (see Table 68). Let it be said, however, that these chances were never very poor. The scarcity of women helped to place widows and divorced women in a position that was surprisingly good, especially in view of the contrary impression given by the accepted notions about their low repute in China.

Men made much larger gains than women, and here they not only equalled but eventually surpassed women in the degree to which they succeeded in getting such terms on remarriage. Judged by this standard, divorced people of either sex were better off than the widowed. This was partly because they were younger and in that respect more marriageable; but in any case if their prospects were so bright, it is impossible to assert that a Chinese taboo against remarriage of divorced people is very strong.

So it is evident that the explanation for these trends in divorce rests upon answers to questions about other trends and patterns of marriage, and that these more significant answers are incomplete

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without some explanation of the peculiar role of divorce in early Taiwan. But there is a common thread running through both of these problems. The negotiation of marriages has been profoundly influenced by the supply of eligible women in relation to that of men—the marriage market formerly was one in which women of marriageable age were scarce. This situation conferred several advantages on the families containing eligible girls, as against those with young men seeking marriage: (1) an excellent chance to avoid permanent spinsterhood by eventually marrying, (2) a better chance to find a partner not previously married, (3) a better chance for them to remarry, if a widow or divorced, and (4) more favorable terms on remarriage.

The premium formerly enjoyed by marriageable women supplies the best clue not only to the favorable matches open to families with adult daughters, but also to the reasons why they might afford to suffer the supposed indignity of a divorce. It has been pointed out above that Chinese tradition views divorce one-sidedly—it is something to be initiated by the husband's family, since the wedding makes the wife a member of their household, and the household is where the well-known strains attending her presence arise. But the trends in divorce cannot be explained on this basis. It would imply that husbands, or their families, provoked a profusion of divorces when their own chances of remarriage were at low ebb, and that they became less desirous of divorce as these chances improved.

The wife's parental family does not actually suspend its attachments or obligations to her upon marriage, though commentaries on the Chinese family system commonly give this impression. Her relatives are ordinarily a party to the marriage itself, and may be very alert to the connection which it establishes between the two families. They can often choose whether to let a dispute develop into a break in this connection; sometimes they ensure this turn of events by upholding her interests, or by quarreling over unfulfilled terms of the marriage agreement, whereas they would show more restraint if her chance for remarriage were not good.

Nor is the position of the wife herself always so helpless as it is depicted. Over one-fifth of the earlier registered marriages between Taiwanese were not of the "ordinary" type at all, but were matrilocal. Though they did not all have the same standing in custom,[12]

[12] They include three recognized forms: adoption of a future son-in-law by a girl's parents, who may then be in charge of him from childhood on; simply marrying-in by the husband; and marrying-in with apparently some restriction to his rights of inheritance. The exact distinctions are left somewhat unclear, for the terms are Japanese, and the facts Chinese. It is also likely that there were variations in procedure from one place to another.